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PROFITS FROM POTATOES

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A radio talk by Leroy Getz, 4-H club member, Carbon County, Pennsylvania, to be delivered Saturday, July 2, 1932, in the National 4-H club radio program, broadcast by a network of 59 associate NBC radio stations.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

In 1927, 12 other boys and myself organized the first Acre Potato Club of Carbon County, Pennsylvania. I have carried on that type of project ever since. Four out of the five seasons, I grew more than 400 bushels of potatoes on my acre. To accomplish this, I followed the cultural methods and instructions as laid down by our best potato authorities of The Pennsylvania State College Extension Service and our county agent.

The first year, I planted one acre of potatoes. This acre yielded 442.9 bushels. Here were my methods. I plowed down a heavy clover sod in the latter part of May. I applied to this acre 1200 pounds of 5-10-5 fertilizer; then planted the crop 28 by 8 inches in early June, using 26 bushels of seed potatoes. I sprayed the potatoes eight times at a cost of \$15.50. The fertilizer cost \$21.00; the seed \$52.00. Preparing the soil, planting, and cultivating cost \$18.00. This was a cost of 46 cents per bushel plus 6 cents for harvesting, making a total cost of 52 cents per bushel.

I sold the 442 bushels at \$1.25 per bushel on field-run basis, a gross receipt of \$552.50. The cost of growing the crop was \$123.02, leaving a net profit of \$429.48 for 1927. My brother and I also got a free trip to the State Farm Products Show at Harrisburg for having the highest yield in the State.

In 1928, because of the wet season and insufficient sunshine, the yield fell to 379 bushels. These potatoes sold at 60 cents per bushel at the farm, giving me a total receipt of \$227.40. The production cost was \$120.00, leaving a net profit of \$107.40.

In 1929, I again qualified for the 400-bushel club by raising 446 bushels. This crop sold at \$1.20 at the farm which gave a gross value of \$535.20. After deducting \$120.00 for production costs, I had a net profit of \$415.00 on my acre.

I qualified for the 400-bushel club once more in 1930, with a yield of 472 bushels. These potatoes sold for \$1.00 a bushel at the farm, giving me a gross sale of \$472.00. That year my production costs were smaller, because we had bought better machinery. The cost of production was \$109.50 which left a net profit of \$362.50 for 1930. Besides this profit, I won a trip to State College.

My experience in club work during the first three years has helped me to become very much interested in club work, so that in 1930 I joined two more clubs, namely, sweet corn and bee club.

In 1931 I again started out as in previous years, but with one year more of experience to my credit. This year my acre yielded 432 bushels. The production expenses were reduced to \$67.00 an acre, due to cheaper seed, fertilizer and labor. The potatoes sold at 45 cents a bushel, giving a gross sale of \$193.50, and a net profit of \$126.50.

My profits for five years of work in the Carbon County Acre Potato Club were \$1450.88, giving me an average annual profit of \$290.17. In spite of a few "low-price" years, I profited every year. This proves that there are opportunities for profit in potatoes every year if you follow the best cultural methods and keep above the average in yield and below the average in cost.

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This work has given me valuable experience in larger scale potato growing. It has made it possible for me to carry on the spraying work on 155 acres of potatoes in 1931.

I have used my profits from club work to acquire a high school education. I had to travel a distance of nine miles to get to the nearest high school. Part of the profit I also used for a short course at State College.

In our family there are seven brothers and sisters, including myself, in various kinds of club work that is carried on in Carbon County. Five of us are in the Acre Potato Club; two in the Poultry Club; two in the Bee Club; two in the Strawberry Club; two in the Sweet Corn Club; and two in the Celery Club; making a total of fifteen 4-H club projects in operation on our farm.